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Marion Lorne

Marion Lorne MacDougal[2] or **MacDougall** (August 12, 1883[1] – May 9, 1968), known professionally as **Marion Lorne**, was an American actress on stage, film, and television. After a career in theatre in New York and London, Lorne made her first film in 1951, and for the remainder of her life played small roles in films and television. Her recurring role as Aunt Clara in the comedy series *Bewitched*, between 1964 and her death in 1968, brought her widespread recognition, and she was posthumously awarded an Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series.

Marion Lorne

Lorne in 1957

Born	Marion Lorne MacDougal or MacDougall August 12, 1883[1] West Pittston, Pennsylvania, U.S.
Died	May 9, 1968 (aged 84)[1] Manhattan, New York, U.S.
Resting place	Ferncliff Cemetery, Hartsdale, New York 41°01′39″N 73°49′57″W
Occupation	Actress
Years active	1905–1968
Spouse	Walter C. Hackett (m. 1911; died 1944)

Early life and education

Lorne was born in West Pittston, Pennsylvania, a small mining town halfway between Wilkes-Barre and Scranton. She was the daughter of William Lorne MacDougall, MD, and his wife, Jane Louise (née Oliver), known as "Jennie". She was born in 1883 (although by the 1920s, she had shaved five years off her age). While her year of birth is listed as 1885 in some sources, including the date inscribed on her urn (https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/474x/44/d6/33/44d633845d5844d8be5d466d22a002c1.jpg) (which appears to be erroneous), it was usually listed as 1888 when she was alive. The 1900 United States Census (enumerated in June 1900) gives her age as 16,[3] and along with the Social Security Death Index (SSDI), lists her year of birth as 1883. Her parents were Scottish and English immigrants. She had a younger brother, Lorne Taylor MacDougall.[4] She studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City.[4]

Career

Lorne debuted on Broadway in 1905; she also acted in London theaters, enjoying a flourishing stage career on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In London, she had her theater, the Whitehall, where she had top billing in plays written by Walter C. Hackett, her husband.[4] None of her productions at the Whitehall had runs shorter than 125 nights.[4]

After appearing in a few Vitaphone shorts, including *Success* (1931) starring Jack Haley, she made her feature-film debut in her late 60s in *Strangers on a Train* (1951), directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

In the early days of TV, from 1952 until 1955 Lorne had a regular role as perpetually confused junior high school English teacher Mrs. Gurney on *Mister Peepers*.[5]

From 1957 to 1958, she co-starred with Joan Caulfield in the NBC sitcom *Sally* in the role of an elderly widow, who happens to be the co-owner of a department store.[6][7] It was cancelled after one 26-episode season.[6][7] Although afraid of live television, declaring, "I'm a coward when it comes to a live [television] show",[8] she was persuaded to appear a few times to promote the film *The Girl Rush* with Rosalind Russell in the mid-1950s. Between 1958 and 1964, she made regular appearances on *The Garry Moore Show* (1958–1962).

Her last role, as Aunt Clara in *Bewitched*, brought Lorne her widest fame as a lovable witch who is losing her powers due to old age (and whose spells usually end in disaster). Aunt Clara usually visited by coming down the chimney; her hobby was collecting doorknobs, and she often brought her collection with her on visits. Lorne had an extensive collection of doorknobs in real life, some of which she used as props in the series.[9]

Lorne with Louise Drew in the play *The Florist Shop* (1909)

Death

Lorne appeared in 27 episodes of *Bewitched* and was not replaced after she died of a heart attack in her Manhattan apartment on May 9, 1968, aged 84, prior to the start of production of the show's fifth season.[10] She is interred at Ferncliff Cemetery in Greenburgh, New York.[11]

Posthumous

The producers of *Bewitched* decided that Lorne's character as Aunt Clara could not be replaced by another actress. (Aunt Clara was never mentioned in any subsequent *Bewitched* episode after her death.) Comedic actress Alice Ghostley was recruited to fill the gap as "Esmeralda", a different type of older witch with wobbly magic whose spells often went astray. Coincidentally, Lorne and Ghostley had appeared together in one scene as partygoers in the classic comedy-drama film *The Graduate*, made the year before Lorne's death.[12] She received a posthumous Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series for her work on *Bewitched*. The award was accepted by *Bewitched* star Elizabeth Montgomery.

Personal life

In 1911, Lorne married playwright Walter C. Hackett. They were married until his death in 1944. The couple had no children.[13]

Filmography and television work

Year	Title	Genre	Role	Notes
1931	*Success*	Short film	Molly's mother	Uncredited
1951	*Strangers on a Train*	psychological thriller	Mrs. Anthony	
July 3, 1952, to June 12, 1955	*Mister Peepers*	sitcom	Mrs. Gurney	television
1955	*The Girl Rush*	musical comedy	Aunt Clara	
August 21, 1955	*The Ed Sullivan Show*	variety	Herself in "The Girl Rush Show"	
September 17, 1955	*Perry Como's Kraft Music Hall*	variety	Herself	
1956–57	*The Steve Allen Show*	variety	Herself	
1957–58	*Sally*	sitcom	Myrtle Banford	television, 26 episodes
1958	*Suspicion*	mystery drama	Mrs. Foster	television, one episode
1958	*DuPont Show of the Month*	anthology series	Veta Louise Simmons	television, episode (television adaptation of the comedy play *Harvey* (1944))
1958–1964	*The Garry Moore Show*	variety show	herself	television
1959 (November 25, 1959)	*I've Got a Secret*	game show	herself	television
1964–1968	*Bewitched*	sitcom	Aunt Clara	television, 28 episodes, (final appearance)
1967	*The Graduate*	comedy drama	Miss DeWitte	

Theatre work

- *Dance Me a Song* as Grandmother (January 20, 1950 – February 18, 1950)
- *Harvey* as Veta Louise Simmons (November 1, 1944 – January 15, 1949)
- *Off With The Motley* (1937-1938) [Whitehall Theatre, London]
- *London After Dark* (1937) [Streatham Hill Theatre]
- *London After Dark* (1937) [Apollo Theatre, London]
- *The Fugitives* (1936) [Whitehall Theatre, London]
- *Espionage* (1935-1936) [Apollo Theatre, London]
- *Afterwards* (1933) [Whitehall Theatre, London]

- *The White Sisters* (1933) [Whitehall Theatre, London]
- *The Gay Adventure* (1932) [Whitehall Theatre, London]
- *Road House* (1932) [Whitehall Theatre, London]
- *Take a Chance* (1931) [Whitehall Theatre, London]
- *Captain Applejack* (1931) [Whitehall Theatre, London]
- *Good Losers* (1931) [Whitehall Theatre, London]
- *It Pays to Advertise* (1930-1931)
- *Hyde Park Corner* (1930)
- *The Freedom of the Seas* (1929)
- *Sorry You've Been Troubled* (1929)
- *Regeneration* (1928)
- *Other Men's Wives* (1928)
- *The Wicked Earl* (1928) [His Majesty's Theater, London]
- *The Barton Mystery* (1927)
- *77 Park Lane* (1927)
- *77 Rue Chalgrin* (1925)
- *Ambrose Applejohn's Adventure* (1921-1923) [Criterion Theatre, London]
- *Mr. Todd's Experiment* (1920)
- *The Barton Mystery* (October 13–30, 1917; 20 performances)
- *It Pays to Advertise* (1915-1916)
- *Don't Weaken* (January 1914)
- *The Little Minister* as Lady Babbie (June 22, 1910 - 1910) [Hunter-Bradford Players at the Parsons Theater]
- *The Florist Shop* as Angelica Perkins (August 9, 1909 - September 1909)
- *The Devil* as Mimi (August 18, 1908 - November 1908)
- *Here Tonight* (1908)
- *Mrs. Temple's Telegram* (February 1, 1905 - March 27, 1905)

Awards and nominations

Year	Result	Award	Category	Series	Reference
1954	nominated	Emmy Award	Best Series Supporting Actress	*Mr. Peepers*	[14]
1955	nominated	Emmy Award	Best Supporting Actress in a Regular Series	*Mr. Peepers*	[14]
1958	nominated	Emmy Award	Best Continuing Supporting Performance by an Actress in a Dramatic or Comedy Series	*Sally*	[14]
1967	nominated	Emmy Award	Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Comedy	*Bewitched*	[14]
1968	won (posthumously)	Emmy Award	Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Comedy	*Bewitched*	[14]

See also

Biography portal

Film portal

Theatre portal

Television portal

- List of American film actresses
- List of American television actresses
- List of Americans of English descent
- List of people from New York City
- List of people from Pennsylvania
- List of Primetime Emmy Award winners
- List of Scottish Americans

References

1. According to the 1900 United States census, MacDougall was born in 1883. (http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?_phsrc=wON3&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&gss=angs-c&new=1&rank=1&gsfn=Marion%20L&gsfn_x=0&gsln=McDougall&gsln_x=0&msbdy=1883&msbdy_x=1&msbdp=2&MSAV=0&uidh=57k&pcat=35&h=47073668&db=1900usfedcen&indiv=1&ml_rpos=1) However other sources cite 1885, including the urn in which her ashes are held, or 1888, which no longer has any credibility.
2. Jeb H. Perry (1980). *Variety Obits: An Index to Obituaries in Variety, 1905-1978* (https://books.google.com/books?id=5d9NAQAAIAAJ). Scarecrow Press. p. 175. ISBN 978-0-8108-1289-5.
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11. "Celebrities & Notables" (https://ferncliffcemetery.com/visit-ferncliff/celebrities-notables/?ip=1). *Ferncliff Cemetery Association*. Retrieved June 20, 2021.
12. "When Esmeralda Sneezed" (http://www.harpiesbizarre.com/Esmeralda.htm). harpiesbizarre. October 1, 2007. Retrieved October 1, 2007.
13. "Obituary for Marion Lome (Aged 82)" (https://www.newspapers.com/clip/64089741/obituary-for-marion-lome-aged-82/). *Los Angeles Times*. May 19, 1968. Retrieved November 27, 2020.
14. Database (undated). "Marion Lorne" (http://www.emmys.com/celebrities/marion-lorne). emmys.com (database operated by Academy of Television Arts & Sciences). Retrieved October 7, 2012.

External links

- Marion Lorne (https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/4048) at Find a Grave
- Marion Lorne (https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/50134) at the Internet Broadway Database
- Marion Lorne (https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0521079/) at IMDb
- Marion Lorne (http://collections.mcny.org/CS.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=24UP1GK7Q6Y5&SMLS=1&RW=1165&RH=900) in 1914 with Wallace Worsley later a famous film director (City Museum of New York)
- I've Got A Secret! - Marion Lorne 11/25/1959 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UD3d1JrUww)

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